

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**MARLITA WILLIAMS, )  
Petitioner, )  
v. ) 1:12CV1206  
REUBEN YOUNG,<sup>1</sup> )  
Respondent. )**

**ORDER AND RECOMMENDATION  
OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Petitioner, a prisoner of the State of North Carolina, has submitted a letter in which she seeks to attack the sentence she received at a state court resentencing proceeding.<sup>2</sup> The document she has filed is not a recognizable method for achieving this goal. Instead, the proper avenue for such an attack is ordinarily a petition for habeas corpus. For this reason, the Court will construe the submission as a petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 for a writ of habeas corpus by a person in state custody. For the following reasons, the Petition cannot be further processed.

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<sup>1</sup> Petitioner has not named her custodian as the respondent. Rule 2, Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases, requires that the petition name the state officer having custody of the applicant as respondent. The Court takes judicial notice that a proper respondent for North Carolina state prisoners challenging their North Carolina judgment of conviction is the Secretary of Public Safety. Naming the wrong custodian is a common point of confusion, and the Court assumes that Petitioner wishes to name the proper custodian as respondent. Accordingly, unless Petitioner objects within eleven days of the issuance of this Order, the Petition is deemed from this point forward to be amended to name Reuben Young, who is currently the Secretary of Public Safety, as Respondent.

<sup>2</sup> Petitioner also appears to be asking the Court for advice or help with her case. The Court cannot provide legal advice.

1. Filing fee was not received, nor was an affidavit to proceed *in forma pauperis* submitted and signed by Petitioner.
2. Petitioner has not used the required § 2254 Forms. Rule 2, R. Gov. § 2254 Cases. The Clerk will forward to Petitioner the proper forms.
3. Petitioner has failed to indicate that state court remedies have been exhausted as required by 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b). In fact, she makes no mention in her letter of having presented her claims to the state courts.

Because of these pleading failures, the Petition will be filed and then dismissed, without prejudice to Petitioner filing a new petition on the proper habeas corpus forms with the \$5.00 filing fee, or a completed application to proceed *in forma pauperis*, and otherwise correcting the defects noted once she exhausts her remedies in the state courts.<sup>3</sup> The Court has no authority to toll the statute of limitation, therefore it continues to run, and Petitioner must act quickly if she wishes to pursue this Petition. See Spencer v. Sutton, 239 F.3d 626 (4th Cir. 2001). To further aid Petitioner, the Clerk is instructed to send Petitioner a new application to proceed *in forma pauperis*, new § 2254 forms, and instructions for filing a § 2254 petition, which Petitioner should follow.

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<sup>3</sup> Because Petitioner's submission is being dismissed without prejudice and is not being decided on its merits, this case will not count as a first petition which would later trigger the prohibitions against second or successive petitions found in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b). However, if Petitioner chooses to later submit a § 2254 petition that conforms with this Order and Recommendation, she should be aware that she is normally entitled to have only one § 2254 petition decided on its merits. Second or successive petitions are barred from consideration by this Court unless a petitioner first receives permission from the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to file such a petition. 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b). That permission is granted only in very narrow circumstances. Because of this, Petitioner should act carefully in resubmitting a petition. See generally Castro v. United States, 540 U.S. 375 (2003). If Petitioner wishes to challenge her conviction, she must use the § 2254 forms supplied by the Court, include all of the claims for relief she wishes to raise, and closely follow the instructions provided. Petitioner may also choose not to submit a petition. Finally, if Petitioner wants a form of relief other than relief from her conviction or sentence, she should make that clear in any new submission and should state that she is not seeking to attack her conviction or sentence. She should not use the § 2254 forms in that instance.

*In forma pauperis* status will be granted for the sole purpose of entering this Order and Recommendation of dismissal with permission to file a new petition which corrects the defects of the present Petition once she exhausts her remedies in the state courts.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that *in forma pauperis* status is granted for the sole purpose of entering this Order and Recommendation. The Clerk is instructed to send Petitioner § 2254 forms, instructions, and a current application to proceed *in forma pauperis*.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that this action be construed as a habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 and dismissed *sua sponte* without prejudice to Petitioner filing a new petition which corrects the defects of the current Petition once she exhausts her remedies in the state courts. The new petition must be accompanied by either the five dollar filing fee or a current application to proceed *in forma pauperis*.

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/s/ L. Patrick Auld  
**L. Patrick Auld**  
**United States Magistrate Judge**

Date: November 13, 2012